

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 NIC-01

SAJ-01 DRC-01 /086 W

----- 063918

R 041522Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8406

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

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BONN FOR RUSSELL; ROME FOR AMERSON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OGEN YO

SUBJECT: KOMUNIST ARTICLE CRITICIZING VOA

REF: BELGRADE 0099, BONN 00585, ROME 1259

1. DURING TWO-HOUR LUNCH CONVERSATION WITH BRANKO SKRINJAR, PAO AND AIO WITH DIFFICULTY KEPT SLIPPERY KOMUNIST CORRESPONDENT ON HOOK, WITH RESULT THAT HE EVENTUALLY ADMITTED NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE FOR ACCUSATION AGAINST VOA. EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BONN AND ROME REFTELS INVALUABLE IN PINNING HIM DOWN. FINAL RESULT WAS LAME ASSERTION OF POSSIBLY BEING "MISLED ORALLY BY UNIDENTIFIED GERMAN AND ITALIAN NEWS SOURCES," PLUS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF "GRAMMATICAL IMPRECISION" RESULTING FROM ALLEGED REWRITE OF COMMENTARY.

2. DURING CONVERSATION SKRINJAR PROTESTED

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ALTERNATELY FRIENDSHIP FOR U.S., "PRESSURE FROM EAST," AND

LONG HISTORY OF RELIABLE REPORTING AS CORRESPONDENT. EVOKED
LIST OF ALLEGED "AMERICAN FRIENDS" DURING LONG SERVICE OVERSEAS,
ONLY ONE OF WHICH PAO RECOGNIZED BEING BILL STERAMAN
DURING HIS ASSIGNMENT AS SPO VIENNA.

3. QUESTION OF CORRECTION BY KOMUNIST STILL UNCERTAIN VIEW
SKRINJAR STATEMENT HE INTENDED CONTACT ALLEGED INFORMANTS
TO ASCERTAIN ORIGINL SOURCE OF INFORMATION. WE INTEND
PURSUE QUESTION FURTHER.

4. COMMENT: REGARDLESS OF WHAT RESULTS SKRINJAR
ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION, HE AND
HIS EDITORS WILL NO DOUBT THINK TWICE BEFORE RUNNING
FURHTER SOVIET-TYPE ACCUSATIN RE VOA AND USIA ACTIVITIES.
JOHNSON

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